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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NIAMEY 000027

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PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHER

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TAGS: PGOV PREL EAID SOCI KDEM EU US NG

SUBJECT: NIGER: EU DELEGATION HEAD EXPLAINS VIEWS ON
NIGERIEN POLITICAL IMPASSE, COTONOU ACCORD CONSULTATIONS

REF: 09 NIAMEY 1005

Classified By: DCM Eric Whitaker, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C/NF) Summary: Although the EU has suspended budgetary support to the Government of Niger (GON) due to recent anti-constitutional actions by President Tandja, it will continue humanitarian aid, including food security. According to the EU Head of Delegation, the EU has provided a 120-day window in its Cotonou Accord consultations with the GON, during which it is monitoring negotiations between the GON and the political Opposition. Although the Embassy plans not to attend President Tandja's January 13 New Year's address to the diplomatic corps, the EU has decided to do so in consideration of ongoing GON-Opposition dialogue, which it is monitoring as an element of the EU's ongoing Cotonou Accord consultation with the GON. The German DCM recently noted that the ECOWAS Mediator for the GON-Opposition negotiations had asked the EU expressly not to issue a statement following the December 22 end of President Tandja's second term of office under the 1999 Constitution, even as the USG chose to do so. End summary.

EY Delegation Head: 120-Day Window; Assessment Coming

¶2. (C/NF) On January 6, European Union (EU) Head of Delegation Hans-Peter Schadek (protect) called on DCM to confer on the current Nigerien political impasse and the demise of democracy over the past half year. Schadek said that the EU had decided to provide the Government of Niger with a 120-day period from December 8, 2009 to pursue political accommodation with the Opposition in relation to ongoing Cotonou Accord Article 96 consultations between the EU and the GON. In early February 2010, the EU will conduct a mid-term assessment of progress to date in the GON-Opposition negotiations as a part of the EU-GON consultations. The EU, he added, was not considering travel restrictions on GON officials at this time.

EU Budget Aid Suspended, Humanitarian Aid to Continue

¶3. (C/NF) Schadek stated that the EU had "provisionally" suspended direct budgetary support to the GON, and that no new programs that were not humanitarian in nature) including food security - would be launched. Those existing would run their course and not be "renewed." Humanitarian programs to be continued included those involving "vulnerable groups" and those in the Agadez area of northern Niger, which had been hit hard by late 2009 flooding and the consequences of nearly three years of rebel conflict.

¶4. (SBU) DCM provided Schadek English and French copies of the December 23 statement by the Department of State regarding the USG decision to suspend non-humanitarian assistance and levy travel restrictions against the GON, and clarified the nature and extent of assistance programs that the USG would continue to provide to Niger.

Schadek: President Tandja to Address Dip Corps

¶5. (C/NF) Before departing, Schadek recalled that the annual New Year's address of the diplomatic corps by President Tandja would soon occur, and inquired as to whether the U.S. Embassy would be represented. The DCM responded that the matter was under consideration, and that the Embassy would notify Schadek subsequently of its decision; Schadek indicated that his inclination at present was not to participate. On January 12, DCM advised Schadek that the Embassy had decided not to participate in the January 13 event; Schadek said that while he would represent the EU at President Tandja's address, he would leave the event promptly. He noted that the EU-GON consultation process was ongoing, and that no conclusion yet had been reached.

Mediator Asks EU to not Issue Statement

¶6. (C/NF) Note: On New Year's Eve, German Deputy Chief of Mission Thomas Weber (protect) had advised DCM that ECOWAS Mediator for the Inter-Nigerien Political Dialogue (reftel) retired General and former Nigerian head of state Abdulsalami Aboubakar had asked the EU not to issue a statement in the wake of the passing of December 22, which would have been the

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last day of President Tandja's second term in office, and final day under the 1999 Constitution. End note.

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